

LIST 30. THE 20 MOST COMMON SUFFIXES

This is a research-based list for those who wish to see the data. These 20 suffixes account for 93 percent of occurrences.

Rank	Suffix	Meaning	%	Example
1	s, es	plurals	31	<i>boys</i>
2	ed	past-tense verbs	20	<i>wanted</i>
3	ing	verb form/present participle	14	<i>playing</i>
4	ly	characteristic of	7	<i>friendly</i>
5	er, or	person connected with	4	<i>teacher</i>
6	ion, tion, ation, ition	act, process	4	<i>action</i>
7	ible, able	can be done	2	<i>likeable</i>
8	al, ial	having characteristics of	1	<i>final</i>
9	y	characterized by	1	<i>funny</i>
10	ness	state of, condition of	1	<i>happiness</i>
11	ity, ty	state of	1	<i>activity</i>
12	ment	action or process	1	<i>enjoyment</i>
13	ic	having characteristics of	1	<i>comic</i>
14	ous, eous, ious	possessing the qualities of	1	<i>serious</i>
15	en	made of	1	<i>enliven</i>
16	er	comparative	1	<i>bigger</i>
17	ive, ative, itive	adjective form of a noun	1	<i>attentive</i>
18	ful	full of	1	<i>sorrowful</i>
19	less	without	1	<i>hopeless</i>
20	est	comparative	1	<i>biggest</i>

All other suffixes accounted for only 7% of the words. See List 31 for a more complete list of suffixes.

Source: White, T. G., Sowell, V., and Yanagihara, A. (1999). Teaching elementary students to use word-part clues. *The Reading Teacher*, 42, 302–308.

LIST 31. MORE SUFFIXES

Suffixes are letter groups that are added to the end of a base word or root. They frequently signify the part of speech and sometimes add meaning. There are two types of suffixes: derivational and inflectional.

Derivational suffixes are more numerous. When added to a base word, this type of suffix creates a new word that is "derived" from the base word but has a different meaning. For example, the addition of *-less* to *hope* creates *hopeless*, a word related to *hope* but different in meaning. The following is a list of derivational suffixes. The most frequently occurring suffixes are listed at the beginning level. Suffixes that are somewhat less frequent but still quite common are listed in Intermediate to Advanced.

BEGINNING SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-able, -ible	is, can be	comfortable, learnable, walkable, climbable, perishable, durable, gullible, combustible
-ar, -er, -or	one who	beggar, liar, teacher, painter, seller, shipper, doctor, actor, editor
-en	to make	strengthen, fasten, lengthen, frighten, weaken
-er	more	smarter, closer, lighter, quicker, softer, luckier
-ess	one who (female)	princess, waitress, countess, hostess, actress
-est	most	smartest, closest, lightest, quickest, softest, luckiest
-ette	small	dinette, diskette, majorette, barrette
-ful	full of	joyful, fearful, careful, thoughtful, cheerful
-ish	relating to	childish, fiftyish, bookish, selfish
-less	without	thoughtless, tireless, joyless, ageless, careless
-like	resembling	lifelike, homelike, childlike, computerlike
-ly	resembling	fatherly, scholarly, motherly, sisterly, brotherly
-ment	action or process	government, development, experiment
-ness	state or quality of	kindness, happiness, goodness, darkness, fullness
-ship	state or quality of	friendship, hardship, citizenship, internship

INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-a, -ae	plural	data, criteria, memoranda, alumnae, algae, formulae
-acious	inclined to	loquacious, mendacious, audacious, fallacious
-ade	action or process	blockade, promenade, escapade
-age	action or process	marriage, voyage, pilgrimage, blockage, rummage
-an	relating to	urban, American, veteran, Hawaiian, metropolitan
-ance, -ence	state or quality of	repentance, annoyance, resistance, violence, absence, reticence
-ancy, -ency	state or quality of	buoyance, truancy, vacancy, vagrancy, frequency, clemency, expediency, consistency
-ant, -ent	one who	servant, immigrant, assistant, merchant, regent, superintendent, resident
-ant	inclined to	vigilant, pleasant, defiant, buoyant, observant
-arian	one who	librarian, humanitarian, libertarian

MORE SUFFIXES CONTINUED

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-arium, -orium	place for	aquarium, planetarium, solarium, auditorium
-ary, -ory	place for	library, mortuary, infirmary, laboratory, conservatory
-ation, -ion,	state or quality of	desperation, starvation, inspiration, tension,
-sion, -tion		caution, suspicion, attention, fascination, companion
-ative	inclined to	demonstrative, pejorative, talkative
-ble	repeated action	stumble, squabble, mumble, tumble, fumble
-dom	state or quality of	freedom, boredom, martyrdom, wisdom
-ectomy	surgical removal of	tonsillectomy, appendectomy, mastectomy
-ee	object of action	payee, lessee, employee
-ence	state or quality of	violence, absence, reticence, abstinence
-ency	state or quality of	frequency, clemency, expediency, consistency
-enne	female	comedienne, equestrienne, tragedienne
-er	action or process	murder, plunder, waiver, flounder, thunder
-ern	direction	eastern, western, northern, postern
-ery	state or quality of	bravery, savagery, forgery, slavery
-ese	state or quality of	Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Siamese
-esque	relating to	statuesque, picturesque, Romanesque
-etic	relating to	alphabetic, dietetic, frenetic, athletic, sympathetic
-hood	state or quality of	childhood, adulthood, falsehood, nationhood
-ial, -ian	relating to	filial, commercial, remedial, barbarian, Christian
-ic, -ical	relating to	comic, historic, poetic, public, rhetorical, economical
-ics	scientific or social system	physics, economics, politics, statistics, demographics
-ide, -ine	chemical compound	fluoride, peroxide, sulfide, iodine, chlorine, quinine
-ina, -ine	female	czarina, ballerina, Wilhelmina, heroine, Josephine
-ify	to make	satisfy, terrify, falsify, beautify, villify
-ious	state or quality of	gracious, ambitious, religious, nutritious, delicious
-ism	doctrine of	capitalism, socialism, communism, patriotism
-ist	one who practices	biologist, capitalist, communist, philanthropist
-itis	inflammation of	laryngitis, arthritis, bronchitis, appendicitis
-ity, -ty	state or quality of	necessity, civility, parity, loyalty, honesty, amnesty, unity
-ive	inclined to	active, passive, negative, restive, positive
-ization	state or quality of	civilization, standardization, organization
-ize	to make	standardize, computerize, popularize, pulverize
-ling	small	duckling, yearling, suckling, fledgling
-most	most	utmost, westernmost, innermost, foremost
-oid	resembling	humanoid, asteroid, paranoid, planetoid
-ose	sugars	glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose
-ous	full of	joyous, virtuous, nervous, wondrous
-phobia	fear of	claustrophobia, acrophobia (see List 37, -Phobia and -Philia Word Families)
-some	inclined to	meddlesome, awesome, tiresome, fulsome
-th, -eth	numbers	fifth, twelfth, twentieth, fiftieth
-ulent	full of	turbulent, corpulent, fraudulent, truculent

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-und	state or quality of	rotund, fecund, moribund, jocund
-uous	state or quality of	contemptuous, tempestuous, sensuous, vacuous
-ure	action or process	censure, procure, endure, inure, secure
-ward	direction	forward, backward, eastward, upward, onward
-ways	manner	sideways, longways, crossways
-wise	manner, direction	clockwise, lengthwise, counterclockwise
-y	being or having	fruity, sunny, rainy, funny, gooey, chewy

Inflectional suffixes indicate the grammatical form of words such as the tense or case of verbs, whether a word is an adjective or adverb, and whether a noun is plural or singular. While this sounds complicated, most native speakers of English are already using most of these suffixes in their speech prior to the beginning of formal reading instruction. Therefore, your primary task is to help them translate endings they already know into sounds. If students are reading for meaning, this may happen almost automatically.

NOUN SUFFIX

-s indicates that a noun is plural: books, boys, pencils, dogs, shoes, hands, desks, teachers, students

ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES

Many nouns and/or verbs are changed to adjectives using suffixes. Here are some examples:

- y** (milk—milky; trick—tricky; boss—bossy)
- like** (child—childlike; boy—boylike; life—lifelike)
- ful** (care—careful; thought—thoughtful; fear—fearful)
- ish** (tickle—ticklish; child—childish; Scot—Scottish)
- ic** (scene—scenic; history—historic; metal—metallic)
- ese** (Japan—Japanese; Siam—Siamese; China—Chinese)
- ward** (east—eastward; west—westward; south—southward)
- en** (stole—stolen; chose—chosen; write—written)

These suffixes are used to compare adjectives:

- er** (fatter, shorter, crazier, smarter, faster)
- est** (fattest, shortest, craziest, smartest, fastest)

VERB SUFFIXES

- ed** indicates past tense: walked, cooked, studied, dressed, jumped, cried, typed, tried
- ing** indicates a present participle: eating, singing, freezing, studying, dressing, going
- en** indicates past participle: eaten, frozen, stolen, written, hidden, forgotten, spoken
- s** indicates third-person singular: walks, cooks, studies, dresses, plays, runs, teaches

ADVERB SUFFIX

-ly (or *-ily* if the base word ends in y) indicates an adverb. Many adjectives can be changed to adverbs by adding ly. Examples: quick—quickly, clear—clearly, beautiful—beautifully, slow—slowly, skillful—skillfully, neat—neatly, plain—plainly, loud—loudly, soft—softly, clumsy—clumsily, hungry—hungrily, greedy—greedily

See also List 157, Spelling Rules for Adding Suffixes.

MORE SUFFIXES CONTINUED

NOUN SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-a	plural	data, criteria, memoranda
-ade	action or process	blockage, escapade, parade, promenade
-ade	product or thing	lemonade, marmalade
-ae	plural (feminine)	alumnae, formulae, larvae, algae
-age	action or process	marriage, voyage, pilgrimage
-al	action or process	refusal, revival
-ance	state or quality of	repentance, annoyance, resistance
-ancy	state or quality of	buoyancy, truancy, vacancy, vagrancy
-ant	one who	servant, immigrant, assistant, merchant
-ar	one who	beggar, liar
-ard	one who	drunkard, steward, coward, wizard
-arian	one who	librarian, humanitarian, libertarian
-arium	place for	aquarium, planetarium, solarium
-ary	place for	library, mortuary, sanctuary, infirmary
-ation	state or quality of	desperation, starvation, inspiration
-ation	action or process	emancipation, narration, computation
-cle	small	corpuscule, particle, icicle, cubicle
-cule	small	minuscule, molecule
-crat	person of power	democrat, autocrat
-cy	state or quality of	accuracy, bankruptcy, conspiracy
-cy	action or process	truancy, diplomacy, vagrancy, piracy
-dom	state or quality of	freedom, boredom, martyrdom, wisdom
-ectomy	surgical removal of	tonsillectomy, appendectomy, mastectomy
-ee	object of action	payee, lessee, employee
-eer	person	engineer, puppeteer, auctioneer
-ence	state or quality of	violence, absence, reticence, abstinence
-ency	state or quality of	frequency, clemency, expediency, consistency
-enne	female	comedienne, equestrienne, tragedienne
-ent	one who	superintendent, resident, regent
-er	one who	teacher, painter, seller, shipper
-er	action or process	murder, thunder, plunder, waiver
-ery, -ry	trade or occupation	surgery, archery, sorcery, dentistry
-ery	establishment	bakery, grocery, fishery, nunnery
-ery, -ry	goods or products	pottery, jewelry, cutlery
-ery, -ry	state or quality of	bravery, savagery, forgery, butchery
-ese	person	chinese, portuguese
-ess	one who (female)	waitress, actress, countess, hostess
-et	small	midget, sonnet, bassinet, cygnet
-ette	small (female)	dinette, cigarette, majorette
-eur	one who	chauffeur, connoisseur, masseur
-eur	state or quality of	hauteur, grandeur
-ful	full	cupful, spoonful
-fy	cause to be	solidify, beautify

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-hood	state or quality of	childhood, adulthood, falsehood
-i	plural	alumni, foci
-ian	person	musician, Parisian
-ics	scientific or social system	physics, economics, politics, statistics
-ier, -yer	one who	cashier, financier, gondolier, lawyer
-ide	chemical	fluoride, bromide, peroxide compound
-ina	female	czarina, Wilhelmina, ballerina
-ine	chemical or basic substance	iodine, chlorine, caffeine, quinine
-ine	female	heroine, Josephine, Pauline
-ing	material	bedding, roofing, frosting, stuffing
-ion	state or quality of	champion, companion, ambition, suspicion
-ish	near, like, almost	pinkish, sevenish
-ism	state or quality of	baptism, heroism, racism, despotism
-ism	doctrine of	capitalism, socialism, hedonism
-ist	one who practices	biologist, capitalist, communist
-ite	mineral or rock	granite, anthracite, bauxite
-ite	person	socialite, Luddite
-itis	inflammation of	laryngitis, arthritis, bronchitis
-ity, -ty	state or quality of	necessity, felicity, civility, parity
-ization	state or quality of	civilization, standardization, organization
-kin	small	lambkin, napkin, manikin, Munchkin
-let	small	owlet, rivulet, starlet, leaflet, islet
-ling	small	duckling, yearling, suckling, fledgling
-man	one who works with	cameraman, mailman, doorman
-mat	automatic machine	laundromat, vendomat
-ment	action or process	embezzlement, development, government
-ment	state or quality of	amusement, predicament, amazement
-ment	product or thing	instrument, ornament, fragment
-mony	product or thing	testimony, matrimony, ceremony, alimony
-ness	state or quality of	happiness, kindness, goodness, darkness
-ol	alcohols	methanol, ethanol, glycol
-ology	study or science of	biology, psychology (see List 36, -Ology Word Family)
-or	one who	actor, doctor, donor, auditor
-or	state or quality of	error, stupor, candor, fervor, pallor
-orium	place for	auditorium, emporium
-ory	place for	laboratory, conservatory, purgatory
-ose	sugars	glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose
-osis	abnormal increase	tuberculosis, fibrosis
-ostracy	rule	aristocracy, demostracy
-phobia	fear of	claustrophobia, acrophobia (see List 37, -Phobia and -Philia Word Families)
-s, -es	plural	pens, books, boxes, parentheses
-s	possession	John's, dog's

MORE SUFFIXES CONTINUED

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-ship	skill or art of	penmanship, showmanship, horsemanship
-ship	state or quality of	friendship, hardship, citizenship
-sion	state or quality of	tension, compulsion
-ster	person	gangster, gamester
-th	state or quality of	strength, warmth, filth, depth, length
-tion	state or quality of	attention, caution, fascination
-trix	female	aviatrix, executrix
-tude	state or quality of	gratitude, fortitude, beatitude
-ty	state or quality of	loyalty, honesty, amnesty, unity
-ure	action or process	censure, failure, enclosure, exposure
-wright	one who works with	playwright, shipwright, wheelwright

ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-able	state or quality of	drinkable, washable
-acious	inclined to	loquacious, mendacious, audacious, fallacious
-al	relating to	natural, royal, maternal, suicidal
-an	relating to	urban, American, Alaskan, veteran
-ant	inclined to	vigilant, pleasant, defiant, buoyant
-ary	relating to	honorary, military, literary, ordinary
-ate	state or quality of	fortunate, desperate, passionate
-ative	inclined to	demonstrative, pejorative, talkative
-ble	inclined to	gullible, perishable, voluble, durable
-en	relating to	golden, ashen, wooden, earthen
-ent	inclined to	competent, different, excellent
-er	more (comparative)	fatter, smaller, crazier, smarter
-ern	direction	eastern, western, northern, postern
-ese	state or quality of	Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, Siamese
-esque	relating to	statuesque, picturesque, Romanesque
-est	most (comparative)	fattest, smallest, smartest, fastest
-etic	relating to	alphabetic, dietetic, frenetic
-ful	full of	thoughtful, joyful, careful, fearful
-ial	relating to	filial, commercial, remedial
-ian	relating to	barbarian, physician, Christian
-ic	relating to	comic, historic, poetic, public
-ical	relating to	comical, rhetorical, economical
-ide	state or quality of	candid, sordid, lucid, splendid, rigid
-ile	state or quality of	virile, agile, volatile, docile, fragile
-ine	relating to	feminine, bovine, feline, marine
-ious	state or quality of	gracious, ambitious, religious
-ish	relating to	childish, whitish, fiftyish, Scottish
-ive	inclined to	active, passive, negative, affirmative
-less	without	thoughtless, tireless, ageless, careless
-like	resembling	childlike, homelike, lifelike, boylike

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-ly	resembling	fatherly, motherly, scholarly
-ly	every	daily, weekly, monthly, yearly
-most	most	utmost, westernmost, innermost
-oid	resembling	humanoid, asteroid, paranoid, planetoid
-ose	full of	verbose, morose, bellicose, comatose
-ous	full of	joyous, virtuous, nervous, wondrous
-some	inclined to	meddlesome, awesome, tiresome
-th, -eth	numbers	fifth, twelfth, twentieth, fiftieth
-ular	relating to	granular, cellular, circular, popular
-ulent	full of	turbulent, corpulent, fraudulent
-und	state or quality of	rotund, fecund, moribund, jocund
-uous	state or quality of	contemptuous, tempestuous, sensuous
-ward	direction	forward, backward, eastward, upward
-y	state or quality of	fruity, sunny, rainy, funny, gooey

VERB SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-ade	action or process	blockade, promenade, parade
-age	action or process	ravage, pillage
-ate	to make	activate, fascinate, annihilate, liberate
-ble	repeated action	stumble, squabble, mumble, tumble, fumble
-ed, -d	past tense	talked, walked, baked, raised
-en	past completed action	taken, eaten, proven, stolen
-en	to make	strengthen, fasten, lengthen, frighten, weaken
-er	action or process	discover, murder, conquer, deliver
-fy	to make	satisfy, terrify, falsify, beautify
-ing	continuous action	singing, talking, jumping, eating
-ise	to make	advertise, merchandise
-ish	action or process	finish, flourish, nourish, punish
-ize	to make	standardize, computerize, popularize
-s, -es	form third person	runs, finishes
-ure	action or process	censure, procure, endure, inure

ADVERB SUFFIXES

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Examples</u>
-ly	forms adverb from adjective	slowly, beautifully, happily, largely
-ways	manner	sideways, always, longways, crossways
-wise	manner, direction	clockwise, lengthwise
-ward(s)	direction	onwards, northward

See also List 28, The 20 Most Common Prefixes; List 29, More Prefixes; List 30, The 20 Most Common Suffixes; List 34, Greek and Latin Roots; List 157, Spelling Rules for Adding Suffixes; List 158, Plurals; List 180, Parts of Speech.